

U.S. News: Hood, Mount smart choices

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Hood College was ranked 14th in terms of quality and sixth in terms of value among colleges in the North by U.S. News and World Report in its annual college rankings.

"We are always pleased when the outside world recognizes that this is an institution of excellence," Hood President Shirley Peterson said Thursday. "Being ranked in U.S. News is very good news for us."

Mount St. Mary's College was put in "Tier 1" — schools that didn't make the top 15 but

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were still among the top 40 — of northern regional universities.

"We're certainly pleased we were placed among the Tier 1 northern universities," Mount spokesman Frank Buhrman said.

"At the same time, other guidebooks have placed us even higher, and we believe that the U.S. News rating doesn't do full justice to the Mount."

Hood's ranking will help the school indirectly attract high-quality students, said Joan Powers, Hood's vice president for enrollment management.

"Students and their parents, when they're

comparing colleges, often pay attention to rankings," Ms. Powers said. "I think it puts one in a choice set which indicates quality."

Added Ms. Peterson: "We will brag to prospective students and their families."

She noted that the school already is attracting high-quality students, bragging that this year's incoming freshmen include nine valedictorians, three National Merit Scholars and 50 Maryland Distinguished Scholars.

The 11th annual quality rankings will appear in the Sept. 1 issue of the magazine.

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which will be on newsstands Monday. The value rankings will be in the Sept. 8 issue, which will be on newsstands Sept. 1. The information is also available on the U.S. News Web site at <http://www.usnews.com/>.

The magazine placed colleges in four categories: national universities, national liberal arts colleges, regional universities, regional liberal arts colleges and specialty schools.

Hood and the Mount were considered regional universities. Johns Hopkins was ranked 14th among national universities. The University of Maryland was a second-tier national university, meaning its ranking was between

51 and 116, U.S. News spokeswoman Colleen Connors said.

Harvard and Princeton universities tied as the nation's top national universities. The university that was the top value was Pepperdine University in California, which cost \$10,232. The top national liberal arts college was Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. The top value among liberal arts colleges was Grinnell College in Iowa, which cost \$11,691.

To rank a college's quality, U.S. News looked at a number of factors including how well it retained students, class size, faculty salaries, faculty degrees, the student-to-faculty ratio, student test scores, student high school class and alumni giving.